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Synopses of Important Articles.

The Apostle John.*—It is difficult to express one's idea of this apostle because of the singular spiritual elevation of his character—that element which made him dear to his Master. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome, probably younger than his brother James. Salome, whose nature was an enthusiastically religious one, doubtless exercised much influence over his development. He was not a learned man. His writings show it, for had he been trained in the schools and not by contact with nature and man we would never have had the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. He was a disciple of the Baptist and tells us many things that could have come only from a sympathetic eye-witness of his work. Then he became a disciple of Jesus who at once took him to His heart "because he so leaned on Him and clung to Him." The other disciples seem to have seen how appropriate this relation was and never murmur at it. After the death of Christ he is found at Jerusalem as one of the pillars of the church, apparently not yet having comprehended the entirely independent character of Christianity. Tradition tells us that he long lived at Ephesus and there was buried. In his character is noticed (1) his idealistic nature. He belongs less to the age in which he lived than to the ages that followed him. He sees Jesus with the eye of intuition, his thought clothes itself in general terms. (2) He was contemplative rather than energetic. Yet he was not supine. His feelings flowed deep and strong and expressed themselves sometimes in passionate vehemence of devotion to Christ and indignation against His enemies. (3) He was gentle, womanly, though not timid or effeminate. (4) His nature was preëminently receptive. This is why he was drawn to Jesus and Jesus to him; why he has revealed the heart of Jesus most fully. (5) On this trait of character depend others—his simplicity, sublimity, pathos—all rising out of his absorption of devotion to Christ. These are some of the features of character in the man, from whose thoughts and representation of Christ the deeper and more living theology for which we are anxiously longing, will spring.

A deeply clear and beautiful picture which will hardly bear reduction to the miniature here given.

Polytheism in Primitive Israel.† The use of the term *Elohim* in Gen. 1, is a proof that there was a time when those who then applied it to the one God of Israel, had in the past employed it in its natural meaning of "gods." Other passages indicate it, e. g. "let us make man." The Canaanites are found to use the plural "gods" for the singular, "god" and the Israelites adopted their language. When the term "El" began to be avoided by writers, "elohim" took its place, but though used of the national God, the term implies polytheism in those who used it. That the earliest users of it were affected with some elements of polytheism is seen in the teraphim-worship, and the worship of the high places which died out in Judah first owing to the centralizing of worship at Jerusalem. The frequent lapses of the nation into idolatry show that the old national habits of polytheism still remained. Though there were monotheistic elements in the

* By Rev. Professor William Milligan, D.D., in *The Expositor*, Nov. 1889, pp. 321-341.

† By Rev. Professor A. H. Sayce, in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1889, pp. 25-36.

Semitic mind and religion, they never developed into monotheism, except where the holy prophets of Israel proclaimed the divine message. Natural causes prepared the way by breaking down the old polytheism. The gods of the Canaanites were identified with the national God of Israel; the unity of the political life in the king led to the unifying of the religious life in the one God. The female divinities of the Semite were absorbed in the male consort. Then the time came when the revelation was given: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

This paper, attractive and clear-cut as are its arguments and helpful as its main position may be in explaining some phenomena of the Old Testament, is based on assumptions concerning the history of Israel which do not commend themselves to the majority of students.

The Blood of Jesus Christ; The New Testament Doctrine.* The literal way in which emphasis is laid upon the saving virtue of the blood of Jesus has led many to seek to erase it from New Testament teaching. But it cannot be erased; it belongs to the substance of the book. What does the New Testament mean by it? (1) Scripture says "the blood is the life." Blood is the token of that which is inmost, the life, the character. Hence the New Testament says that we are saved by the blood, i. e. the life, the character of Christ. (2) Blood is also a symbol of transmitted life. There is a power transmittible in God and a power of reception in man. The blood of God, i. e. his character, flows in our lives. We are saved by the blood of Christ when the transmitted nature of God enters into us and becomes part of our own nature through Jesus Christ. (3) It is not mere blood that is shed, which is precious, it is the self-denial and self-sacrifice typified in that blood. Thus the blood of Christ saves in that the life of Christ is laid down for us. But it is only as this life is in us that we are saved by it. We are not saved by "expiation," "substitution," "vicarious" sacrifice. These words are not in the New Testament. We are saved by One who brings the divine life down into the world; and we are saved when our own hearts and our own lives are open and his heart and his life are poured into ours.

This article exhibits what Matthew Arnold called "pouring a fresh stream of thought" about old and established formulas of theology. It seems that the writer, however, gives too little weight to the Old Testament sacrificial system in his explanation of the New Testament view of the Blood of Jesus Christ.

The Bible and Egyptology.†—The points of contact between the Bible and Egyptology on which recent excavations have thrown light are (1) the arrival of Abraham in Egypt, (2) the rise of Joseph, (3) the stay of the Israelites in the country, (4) the Exodus. It is generally agreed that the arrival of Abraham and the settlement of the Israelites occurred at a time when Egypt was governed not by native Pharaohs but by the *Hyksos*. It is highly probable that their invasion of Egypt is connected with the conquest of Lower Mesopotamia by the Elamites. The name of Apepi, Joseph's king, is repeatedly found on the monuments. His statues have been found at Bubastis, which was doubtless an important *Hyksos* settlement. "Goshen" has been located in the immediate vicinity. Apepi became involved in a war with the native prince, the result of which, not appearing, however, in his reign, was the expulsion of the *Hyksos*. Rameses II, was the oppressor of the Hebrews. His reign is known very fully to us. Pithom, his store city, has been discovered. Raamses remains unknown. At Naukratis, granaries, probably similar to those in these cities, have been discovered. We are still doubtful about the place of the Exodus. The name "Raamses," whence they started, must be regarded as describing a district. The view of Ebers and Daw-

* By Lyman Abbott, D.D., in *The Andover Review*, Dec., 1889.

† By Edward Naville, in *The Theological Monthly*, Sept., 1889, pp. 145, 161.